



H.Res. 759 – Recognizing the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the Mall in Washington, DC

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 759 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) on October 18, 2007. The Committee on Foreign Affairs agreed to seek consideration under suspension of the rules, by unanimous consent.

H.Res. 759 is expected to be considered on the floor on October 30, 2007.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 759 resolves that Congress recognizes the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jews in Washington, DC, which embodies the American principle of citizen activism for the greater good.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 1967, many Jews applied to leave the Soviet Union to immigrate to other countries and were denied permission to emigrate by the Soviet government. This group was commonly referred to as the refuseniks.

The United States placed some sanctions on the Soviet Union. In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Act of 1974 into law. This Act prohibited the extension of trade benefits to countries that limit emigration. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan enacted P.L. 97-157 which expressed the sense of Congress that the Soviet Union should cease its repressive actions against individuals who seek the freedom to emigrate or to practice their religious or cultural traditions.

In 1984, the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews was formed to keep members and their staffs informed on developments in the Soviet Union.

In 1987, more than 250,000 people participated in the Freedom Sunday Rally on the National Mall in support of the Soviet Jewry before the start of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

In 1989, the Soviet Union relaxed their emigration policies and allowed the Soviet Jews to leave the country. The Soviet Union codified the right of every Soviet citizen to emigrate in 1991.

STAFF CONTACT

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